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THE COMMUNITY SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM

Introduction

With the war has come increasing recognition of the importance of making sure that the children of this country receive the proper kinds and quantities of food during their formative period. If they are to be mentally and physically equipped to assume their responsibilities as useful and productive citizens, it is necessary for educators, welfare agencies -- in fact all of us -- to take whatever steps are necessary to provide children with the food they need.

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The Food Distribution Administration, for several years, has assisted local communities in their school lunch programs by making food available to them through their state welfare departments. Now, however, it is necessary for communities to assume even more of the responsibilities connected with the program. Shortages of manpower, of warehousing facilities and of trucks, tires, and gasoline have made it increasingly difficult for welfare departments to maintain the warehousing and delivery machinery that is necessary to keep individual programs supplied with food, and recently, many schools and child welfare centers in smaller cities and in outlying areas have had to discontinue their programs.

The new Community School Lunch Program of the Food Distribution Administration was designed specifically to offset these wartime difficulties. Through it, communities will be able to buy foods themselves, from their local farmers and merchants and thereby eliminate the necessity for maintaining elaborate warehousing and transportation facilities. Furthermore, these local purchases will result in increased consumption of seasonally-abundant agricultural commodities close to the area of production, thereby taking some of the load off our already overworked transportation system as well as assuring a more complete utilization of the foods produced by our farmers.

Although this program will be installed nationwide, some outlets for commodities distributed directly will be retained, principally in the larger metropolitan areas. These outlets will be necessary to absorb both the perishable foodstuffs purchased through surplus-removal operations and the supplies purchased for Lend-Lease use which, because of shipping difficulties, changes in requirements, etc. cannot be shipped overseas.

Briefly, the Community School Lunch Program will operate like this: The FDA will designate specific commodities to be purchased giving careful consideration to the availability and nutritive value of the commodity; the sponsoring agency will buy the quantities of those commodities that are needed for their program and the Administration will reimburse the sponsoring agency for the total cost of the commodities purchased, up to a specified maximum amount, provided, of course, that prescribed conditions are adhered to by the sponsoring agency. The program also provides that the sponsor contribute, as a community undertaking, a part of the program cost.

Who May Participate?

Generally speaking, any public, parochial or private school may participate in the program, provided such schools are operated on a non-profit basis. In addition, non-profit child-welfare centers, such as community centers, settlement houses, children's homes, child-aid centers, child day-care centers, playgrounds, boys' or girls' clubs, summer camps, etc. may participate.

Any child attending or visiting participating schools or child-welfare centers may receive meals prepared in whole or in part from commodities purchased through this program.

Who May Sponsor the Program?

Sponsors may be either school departments, systems or boards: child welfare centers: or service organizations such as Parent-Teacher Associations, American Legion posts, Rotary Clubs, Kiwanis Clubs, etc.

Responsibilities of the Sponsoring Agency

The sponsoring agencies will be responsible for adhering to the conditions of the agreement governing the operation of the program. Specifically, their responsibilities will include the proper purchasing, handling and storage of commodities; proper supervision of the preparation and serving of meals; conforming with all laws pertaining to the serving of food in public places; making meals available at no cost to children unable to pay and making no distinction or segregation between paying and non-paying children; using all funds accruing from the operation of the program only for the program, and maintaining such records and making such reports as may be necessary for the efficient operation of the program.

How the Program Operates

1. Sponsor makes application for the program. If it is approved, an agreement is signed.
2. The Administration provides sponsor with a "School Lunch Foods List" which specifies the commodities which may be purchased under the program.
3. Sponsor buys commodities on the list from local farmers, wholesalers or retailers.
4. At the end of month, sponsor submits invoice of purchases, and report of operations.
5. Claim is paid by check within a few days of its receipt by the Administration.

Applying for the Program

School officials may apply for the program by writing the nearest office of the Food Distribution Administration.